

Two types of useless advice: a) Be right. b) Be certain. (But: he is certain).



The problem is to reduce uncertainty, but to act will increase uncertainty.

Question: What should people do when they know they are ignorant; when they expect the unanticipated or surprising or "improbable" event to occur?

a) What do they do?

b) Why? What criteria do they follow? What rules and acts do they reject? How do they expect it to work? What are they trying to achieve or avoid?

c) How does it work? Which patterns of behavior are more successful? Which should be avoided?

d) Can we think up new rules, new relevant objectives or procedures, new types of responses to ignorance; new tests of promise or effectiveness?

If some rule/procedure/response seem "good," or better than the others:

Recommendation:

Then they should follow these good procedures more often, because they are more ignorant than they think. (They should act "as if" they were more ignorant — less adequately informed about the future — than they think they are. Why? Because they are).

Relevant Events ^{or consequences} that were totally unanticipated (esp., ~~unconsidered~~ "officially" or "organizationally" — didn't occur to anyone with the responsibility and/or power to "do something about it") occur often; much more often than people would predict/bet. And

events which were regarded as $< 10\%$ likely occur more than 10% the time (here, events regarded as 90% likely happen less than 90% — but this is less critical to payoffs. It wouldn't be hampered at all if events judged 90% happened ^{95%} ~~by 95%~~, or events judged ~~75%~~ ^{80%} ~~60%~~ happened ^{80%} ~~only 60%~~ — they would be adequately planned/ prepared for anyway. But it tends to be disastrous when an event judged $< 10\%$ likely happens at all, even once; because it wasn't planned after at all, and actual posture is highly "vulnerable" to it (esp. if they ~~were~~ didn't think they were "ignorant."

It would be bad enough if there were, thus, a 10% chance of disaster. But actually, the chance of surprise — and disastrous surprise — is underestimated; i.e. it is much greater than 10% .

One must: a) reduce the chance of surprise (intelligence, reconnaissance, analysis, imagination, theoretical system building); improve expectations (esp. of obviously "dangerous" events) and chance of timely warning.

b) Reduce vulnerability to surprise (redundancy, spare parts, tactical warning, fast response, reserves, ^{insurance} inventories...
Most of these can be justified — to a point — in terms of definite expectations with high variance: like betting on coin-tossing. But they are specifically useful for dealing with ignorance:
Offerings TO THE GOD UNKNOWN.



you can ask of your intelligence system to make surprise less likely. But you can reduce its task to feasible proportions only if you (operators, commanders) make surprise less disastrous.

If you ignore in your planning anything "less likely than not" — and officially organizationaly "forget" it as a contingency or even instruct intelligence not to bother to report it — then unanticipated (or forgotten, or unreported) events will turn up about 50% of the time (more or less, depending on accuracy of expectations), many of which will be disasters. Since every disastrous surprise will be held against intelligence ("you should have told me that me was at least more likely than not, not '10% likely' you stupid bastard"), the intelligence system in this case hasn't got a chance; it will look terrible, and worse than that of a neighboring country that "rarely" gets a disastrous surprise. "At least their intelligence calls the important shots." The point is that, thanks to their operations systems, fewer shots are important. They only get lobbered when something judged less than 5% likely happens, which isn't more than 15% of the time. And their intelligence system can concentrate its efforts on the fewer events that are desiderate to protect against far in advance.

Suppose C (commander) habitually ^{a)} says "Don't bother me with that" if I (intelligence) ^{predicts} ~~reports~~ an event estimated at less than 10% likely; but (b) says "Why didn't you tell me that" when any damaging event occurs that wasn't forecast.

Temptation for I to estimate damaging events as "more than 10% likely" (or as "likely," or "possible," or whatever the ^{to C} acceptable format permits); even when he thinks they are less than 10% likely. Particularly bad events; the kind he will be most critical for if he failed to mention.

Result: bad events "predicted" by I (as being mentionable, or as, say, > 10% likely) come about infrequently, < 10% of the time.

So I is regarded as an "alarmist" or "pessimist"; predictions are discounted, perhaps from 15% down to 5% ("correct" value - 10% - i.e., odds in I's mind); especially his predictions of "bad" events (i.e., "events indicating present or planned course of action is wrong or infeasible or dangerous). This will look like "wishfulness" (and in part it usually is). But C will have an excuse for this wishfulness.

(Bradley, Battle of the Bulge).

A commander, in heat of battle, even has excuse for demanding simplicity from I, for ignoring minor possibilities: to preserve his decisions, make sound action feasible. (Considering more factors might increase the chance of a somewhat better action, but also increase the chance of "no action" or choice from a set of alternatives that has become worse while he deliberated). THE PLANNER DOES NOT HAVE THIS EXCUSE.

Berlin

"Apparent" - accommodation - rests on belief that SU has grievances, that her objectives are legitimate, that one can gain by assisting her to achieve her present objectives.

Question: Can we "live with" SU's current objectives? Are they (to be regarded as) "legitimate"? ~~For~~ Is SU likely pattern of response to concessions desirable, or acceptable?

If not, our problem is to change SU current objectives, SU current views of feasibility and costs; to change SU's pattern of response to concession.

We must "extinguish" her present goals and habits, and "teach" new ones. (Not only her immediate desires, but her habitual response to satisfaction of immediate desires, must have to be altered). (And we would have to set out actively to alter them, not merely "refuse to talk" and wait for them to change).

Are any concessions to the SU now, cheap?

(if they "reinforce" SU current objectives and trigger new hopes and desires; apart from the effects on our Allies).

If any concessions should be made, precisely why? Not a rhetorical question; it is important to be clear and explicit in our beliefs on this, and subject them to criticism.

Super-criteria (abstract. abstractions) are needed to:

a) Help select + add to, ^{or modify} a set of sub-criteria.

b) Resolve conflicts among sub-criteria.

Though logically primary, super-criteria are often "invented" later than some sub-criteria, when needed (for (a) or (b)).

They too are subject to test: how do they perform, e.g. on (a) or (b)?

Acting "as if" two probs were equal, or $\text{one} = \frac{1}{3}$, can mean very different things, depending on operational definition and context (d.p.v.v.). Some will be reasonable and some not, in a given situation.

Heart point: "preparing for" two extreme events, or hypotheses, or distributions, is not the same as preparing for something in between.

(Of two actions that are equally good against midpoint, ^{"composite distribution"} one may be worse than the other against both of the real, extreme possibilities. Or, one may be better against one, but "incompletely bad" against the other.)

Note that Good's evidence for the notion that one assigns "at least" .1 probability to p is that otherwise one would never come to believing in p (but hang prob on it) on the basis of observation, or small evidence. He does not refer to one's ~~actual~~ willingness to bet on it.

Thus, he measures "prior" belief by "how belief changes after observations" — meaning latter, no doubt, "intuitively." He doesn't measure it by one's willingness to make "terminal decisions" on it, prior to non observation.